

SHEFFIELD SCHOOL OF DESIGN.

THE annual meeting took place on Wednesday in last week, the Earl of Arundel and Surrey in the chair. The council's report was first read, in which the increase of Government grant from 250*l.* to 600*l.* per annum was announced, and the number of pupils from 1843 to 1849 stated to have been 509, most of them now engaged in the staple trades of Sheffield. The head master, Mr. Young Mitchell, read a report, chiefly on the exhibition at Paris.

The chairman then addressed the meeting. His lordship disclaimed all intention or ability to treat of art-questions, but felt assured that such schools as this are absolutely essential to the future prosperity of England as a commercial country. When we find other nations combating us with our own weapons, and almost equalling us in these, while excelling us in others, it is absolutely necessary for us to seize on every means of keeping ahead of them as heretofore; for if we fail in that, as a great European power we are gone. And no better way of assisting to do so probably exists than supporting and maturing such schools as this. If that be not zealously done, we may rely on it that other nations will overstock our markets with articles more pleasing at least to the eye, and cheaper, although perhaps hardly so good, and thus we shall be shut out of the great markets of the world. His lordship then complained that less than 150*l.* a-year should as yet have been subscribed by the town.

Mr. Northcote, of the Board of Trade, said that it was the zeal of the teachers and the pupils that had actuated Mr. Poynter and himself in recommending the Government grant. On these accounts he had himself, in evidence, accorded the palm to the Sheffield amongst all the provincial schools. This year, however, an increase to other schools had also been recommended. But the Government looked to the active co-operation of the residents, as, without local energy, they would continue to give no such aid. Referring to the idea that the French are superior to ourselves in taste or talent for matters of art, he regarded such an idea as a mere fallacy. It was education alone that was requisite. And then we must create a demand, we must educate the people, so as to enable them to appreciate the beautiful and excellent in art, and the artist will soon come forward then to produce what is admirable and good. To accomplish all this we must surround the people with objects of beauty in their houses, and familiarize them with it even in their most ordinary household objects and utensils. When a taste for ornamental art in the commonest articles of utility is thus produced amongst the mass, you will proportionately elevate the taste and skill and energy of those who devote themselves to the fine arts. When they are appreciated and admired they will surpass their former selves, and rise rapidly—the multitude pushing up the leaders, and the leaders drawing up the multitude after them. Various other gentlemen addressed the meeting; the usual resolutions were passed, and the prizes were then distributed.

EXHIBITION OF ARTS AND MANUFACTURES OF ALL NATIONS.

THE arrangements for the monster exposition in London of arts and manufactures of all nations, projected by Prince Albert, appear to be going on vigorously. A deputation from the prince, consisting of Mr. Cole and Mr. Fuller, have been to Scotland and to Ireland, in order to meet the leading manufacturers of the country on the subject. It is proposed to be held in the year 1851, and that premiums to the extent of 20,000*l.* should be given for inventions or improvements. It is thought that the Queen will present the prizes. An erection in Hyde-park is talked of, a mile and a-half long, for which designs will be required in competition,—unless, indeed, the Woods and Forests take the matter in hand.

Local committees are to be organized as soon as the result of the interviews with manufacturers has been reported to the prince. The matter will require careful management.

SIR ROBERT PEEL'S PORTRAIT GALLERY, DRAYTON MANOR.*

IT is about twenty years since Sir Robert Peel took down the old house at Drayton Manor occupied by his father, and built the present mansion, from the designs of Sir Robert Smirke, on a site closely adjoining the previous building. It is a quadrangular stone mansion, in the Elizabethan style, of very considerable extent, but without any ostentatious display of architecture, either internally or externally.

The taste and fondness for the fine arts which form so marked and agreeable a feature in Sir Robert's character, exhibit themselves plainly at this residence. A large corridor or gallery, in the centre of the building, has its walls entirely covered with fine works of art, as well as almost every available space on the staircase and elsewhere; and to his high credit be it said, that almost every picture at Drayton Manor is by some artist of the present day.

Sir Robert's collection of pictures having far outgrown the means at his disposal for suitably hanging them, a gallery was erected in 1846, from the designs and under the able direction of Mr. Sydney Smirke, A.R.A. It forms a wing appended to the north-west angle of the mansion, and extends westward about 100 feet. It is built of a fine-grained magnesian limestone, and is designed in the style of the English Renaissance, so as to harmonize with the rest of the building. The exterior is embellished with colossal statues of Rubens, Vandyke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Sir Thomas Lawrence. The gallery within is 90 feet long by 22 feet wide, and 21 feet high, being subdivided into three compartments by columns and pilasters of Italian and German marbles. The *parquet* flooring, and all the wood fittings, are of wainscot and walnut-tree.

The walls are painted of a strong neutral green colour. The ceiling is coved, and elaborately ornamented with corbels and pendants, &c.

The pictures are lighted by skylights in the flat central part of the ceiling.

It does not come within the scope of these pages to enter into any description of the pictures which enrich the walls of this unique gallery; suffice it to say that they almost entirely consist of portraits of Sir Robert's contemporaries, eminent either as statesmen or as men of science or literature, and comprise some of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Reynolds and Lawrence. When we take into consideration the high merit of these pictures as works of art, the distinguished eminence of the persons they represent, and the brilliant character of the individual who has taken delight in paying this homage to contemporary genius, we cannot but regard the Gallery at Drayton Manor with the deepest interest.

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

A GENERAL court was held on Thursday, at the Court-house, Gt. George-street: Sir John Burgoyne in the chair. A long discussion ensued on the question that Mr. Lavers be appointed clerk of surveyors' and contractors' accounts, at a salary of 300*l.* per annum. In pursuance of the recommendations of the Finance Committee, which was finally referred back for the committee to define the duties.

A deputation of the Bermondsey Improvement Commissioners attended the Court, with Mr. Drew, the vestry clerk, complaining generally of the sewerage of the district, and in particular of the system of discharging the contents of the cesspools into the public sewers, without any means accompanying the operation of passing the same to the Thames, and also of the large number of untrapped gullies.

In answer to questions to Mr. Phillips, the chief surveyor, he said there was undoubtedly a much larger amount of filth in the sewers, caused by the increased number of drains laid into them, and from the pumping of the cesspools into the sewers.

The members of the deputation added, that in the neighbourhood of their residences, and particularly in Bermondsey-street, during the process of flushing, the stench was almost unbearable, continuing for days together, and that such offensive odours were never observed until the adoption of that system by the present commission.

Dr. Southwood Smith and Mr. Chadwick contended that the evils arose from the un-

scientific manner in which the operations were conducted, and not from the system of flushing itself. They had endeavoured to obtain the supervision of proper officers, but that proposition was opposed, and it was now too bad for those gentlemen who had opposed it to blame them for the clumsy manner in which these works had been performed.

The secretary, in answer to a question from Mr. Leslie, said the opinions of the medical officers of the various parishes, on the subject of flushing, had been received, amounting to 79, and were thus divided:—Approving flushing, 13; dissentients, 32; neuter, 34. It appeared, also, that from Bermondsey they were,—Approving, 1; dissentients, 1; neuter, 1.

Mr. Leslie insisted that the time had arrived when the system of flushing should be suspended, and an early day appointed to take the whole subject into consideration. He was also of opinion that they had had enough of experiments,—which view was concurred in by the Hon. F. Byng.

Several other commissioners expressed views *pro* and *con*. on the system of flushing, and the deputation were finally assured by the chairman that the court would take the subject into their serious consideration.

Other deputations were heard. One from Islington pointed out the very defective state of the sewerage of their district, and said, if that district were compelled to wait for the adoption of some general system of drainage, that in the interim disease would sweep away one-half of the inhabitants, and referred to the last report of the Registrar-General in justification of this assertion. Allusion was also made to the discharge of the refuse drainage of the new Small-pox Hospital into the open ditches, which it was possible might be attended with the most fatal consequences.

Mr. Lambert Jones, at considerable length, censured the waste of public money on districts where no rates had ever been collected, and said that this district, at the termination of the old commission, possessed funds to the amount of 20,000*l.*, which money had been spent on the Kent and Surrey division, and those parties who paid the money were left without any relief whatever.

It was proposed that the subject should be referred to the Works Committee, as a report on the drainage of the whole district would be presented by the surveyors on Monday next, and at the next court the question might be again brought forward.

Upon this Mr. Leslie advised the deputation again to attend and see what was done.

Mr. Banfield rose to order, and Mr. Chadwick protested against the intrusion of other bodies into their proceedings.—This was replied to with some warmth by Mr. Leslie, who said that, as a public body, they were but trustees for the public, and that they were about spending the money of the deputation, who were perfectly justified in seeing that it was not spent improperly.

The matter was at length referred to the surveyors.

The Drainage of Westminster.—The secretary announced to the court that the Westminster Improvement Commissioners had paid into the court the sum of 3,792*l.*, in pursuance of the resolutions passed for the improved drainage of that district.

Upon the above announcement being made, Mr. Chadwick moved that a report presented by Mr. Austin, consulting engineer, be read.

Mr. Woolrych then read the report referred to. It stated that he appeared in opposition to a work, which, by means of erroneous and unwarrantable statements, had obtained the sanction of the court. The first objection was, that the sanction given to this work prejudged the question of general drainage, and was an injustice to the competition to which the public had been invited. That it is an unnecessary work, founded on erroneous principles, and would soon be as great a nuisance to the neighbourhood as the existing faulty constructions, and that the amount expended upon it will be an utter waste of the rates and funds of the Westminster Improvement Commission, and further, that an efficient and economical subsoil drainage, affording the required relief, may be put in, as well as a temporary provision for surface drainage in far less time, and without the necessity of any such construction as that recommended. It characterized the proposed work as an utterly useless construction, alike unnecessary either for surface or for subsoil drainage, and said a proper subsoil drainage might be laid down at an expense of 1,000*l.* The report concluded by "stating, that as the court, by erroneous statements, had been led into the adoption of a work which prejudges the question of the general drainage, confirming one principle, and condemning another,—a work useless in itself, and leading to a large waste of the rates, and of the funds of the Westminster Improvement Commission, I would beg respectfully to urge that their resolution of the 6th instant with reference to this subject be rescinded."

Mr. Chadwick, in a speech of great length, moved that the resolution of the last court be rescinded.—Mr. Leslie reiterated the statements he made on the subject at the last court, when he wished the subject

* From the third part of Godwin's "Buildings and Monuments." A view of the gallery will be found in *THE BUILDER*, vol. 111. p. 299.